

This Book Belongs to:

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"Climb the mountains and get their good tidings Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The wind will blow their own freshness into you, and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves."

—John Muir



The National Park Service Blue Ridge Parkway assigned the Adopt-a-Trail project to FRIENDS in the spring of 2002 to recruit individuals and organizations to adopt Blue Ridge Parkway Trails and collect their volunteer hours. FRIENDS works cooperatively with the Park Service to administer this program.

FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway's mission is to help preserve, enhance and promote the outstanding natural beauty, ecological vitality, and cultural distinctiveness of the Blue Ridge Parkway and its surrounding scenic landscape, thereby preserving this national treasure for future generations.

TRAIL PROCEDURE MANUAL

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Thanks From FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway

Thank You for volunteering to maintain a trail with the Adopt-A-Trail program!!! Your efforts and donation of your time are greatly appreciated. You are helping to keep these trails open for public use and enjoyment!! We couldn't do it without you!

By maintaining your trail, you will become its most important advocate and protector. In this role, you should become familiar with the necessary skills to maintain your trail and keep the trail, campsites, overlooks, and signs in good repair. Without your vigilant attention, your trail would soon disappear.

You are the eyes and ears of your trail section. Be sure to record your hours, as well as the work you have done on the trail, for FRIENDS' records.

BE SURE TO HAVE FUN!!!

"Some people weave burlap into the fabric of our lives, and some weave gold thread. Both contribute to make the whole picture beautiful and unique."

-Anonymous

Requirements

Clubs or Organizations must be willing to commit to the program for 3 - 5 years. The adopted trail or section of trail must be walked at least once per quarter and should be walked at least once a month from April through October.

TRAINING IS MANDATORY

The Blue Ridge Parkway is the only authorized agency to approve trail adoption. When you have been provided the “approval” to start, call your NPS District Supervisor. Their name and contact information appear on the back page of this booklet. Your NPS Supervisor will assign you a contact person. This person will walk the trail with you the first time to answer your questions.

Each club volunteer or trail captain is expected to submit accurate maintenance reports to FRIENDS’ Adopt-a-Trail coordinator on a monthly basis. These reports will reflect time spent on the trail and all trail maintenance activity. This information is used by the Parkway to assess volunteer activity and long-range planning. Please remember to include your round-trip travel time in your hours.

Program Objectives

The Blue Ridge Parkway manages and maintains three hundred miles of trails. These trails range in length from short leg stretches of less than one-quarter mile to over fifteen miles. Over the past ten years, the Parkway has seen a decline in funding available for the trail maintenance program. At this time, the Parkway is only able to maintain approximately 10% of the needed trail maintenance and repair. The identified backlog of trail repair increases annually. If this trend is allowed to continue, some trails may need to be closed.

The Adopt-A-Trail program solicits assistance from individuals, families, clubs and organizations. Help is accepted in the form of donated time, materials and money. Groups apply or provide donations through FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway, Inc.

The purpose of the program is three-fold. The first is to decrease the backlog of trail maintenance and repair needs; this improves the trails for the enjoyment of visitors and gives Park Service employees time to accomplish other tasks. The second is to promote community partnerships. These partnerships instill a sense of pride in “ownership” of the Parkway. The third is to expand National Park Service presence on trails.

Level of Maintenance

Level 1: Routine Maintenance and Inspection

- Pick up and dispose of litter
- Refresh blaze markers
- Inspect trail
- Remove debris from trail

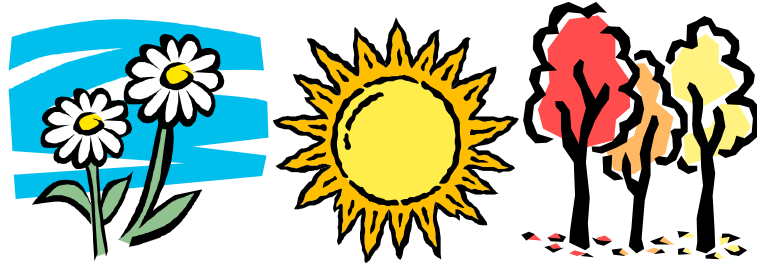
Level 2: Routine & Preventative Maintenance

- All **Level 1** duties
- Clean waterbars and drainage devices
- Level Surface Material
- Clean debris from steps, overlooks, trail corridor, asphalt, etc.

Level 3: Removal End

- All **Level 1 and 2** duties
- Remove fallen trees in trail path (NPS power saw training required)

Other tasks may include applying more gravel and reporting rock formations.



SEASONAL MAINTENANCE

Spring Walk - Through

Tasks

1. Clean out drainage channels
2. Clear blown down trees

Spring walk-throughs are best done at the end of winter before the spring rainy season and before the trail receives much hiker use. This work should be completed by the end of April at the latest.

Trail drainage problems are usually at their worst during the spring rains. Resolving these problems immediately or planning follow-up drainage work takes less guesswork in the spring. Assessment of additional trail work requirements is an important function of the spring walk-through.

Summer Walk - Through

Tasks

1. Clean drainage channels
2. Clear blowdowns
3. Clear trail of woody brush and vegetation
4. Touch up Trail Blazes
5. Clear trail through open areas

The trail is most obscured during summer due to the full bloom of vegetation and the sagging of overhead branches.

A properly blazed stretch of trail needs repairing every three to five years.

Early summer is the best time to clear the trail through open areas, before plants such as grasses and briars reach peak growth.

"We must handle the woods, the water, the grasses so that we will hand them to our children and our children's children in better and not worse shape than we got them."

—President Theodore Roosevelt

Fall Walk - Through

Tasks

1. Clear drainage channels
2. Clear Trail Corridor

One of the best times of the year to clear out drainage structures is after the leaves have dropped from the trees. This puts the trail in good condition during the winter months and is good preparation for heavy spring runoff. The cool weather makes fall an excellent time for rebuilding damaged drainage structures.

“Come to the woods, for here is rest. There is no response like that of the green deep woods. Here grow the wallflowers and the violets. The squirrel will come and sit upon your knee, the logcock will wake you in the morning. Sleep in forgetfulness of all ill. Of all the upness accessible to mortals. There is no upness comparable to the mountains.”

-John Muir

SAFETY

Safety is the most important consideration while working on the trail. There is always the potential for accidents while using trail maintenance tools in the woods. Maintainers need to be constantly aware of these dangers. The best way to work safely is simple: USE COMMON SENSE.

The following is a good common-sense checklist:

1. Let someone know where you are
2. Carry a small first aid kit
3. Wear a good pair of work gloves
4. Wear long pants when working in brush (even in the summer)
5. Be certain all tool heads and handles are tight with no cracks
6. Wear sturdy leather boots when digging or using cutting tools
7. Carry tools on the trail safely
8. Wear blaze orange colors when working during hunting season.

Adopt-A-Trail Reporting Procedures

1. Each Adopt-A-Trail group needs to have a “Team Captain” to coordinate procedures.
2. If your A-A-T group includes youth 16 years and younger, the parents must complete and sign the National Park Service’s Volunteer Form for their children and mail to FRIENDS.
3. All trail volunteers must complete and sign a National Park Service’s Volunteer Form and mail to FRIENDS.
4. The Team Captain ensures all Trail Maintenance Activity (TMA) Forms are filled out each time trail maintenance is provided.
5. On June 30th, September 30th and January 31st, send all TMA Forms to the FRIENDS’ office.
6. FRIENDS’ mailing address:
FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway, Inc.
P. O. Box 20986
Roanoke, VA 24018

Note: All packets include the National Park Service’s Volunteer Form and Trail Maintenance Activity Form. Please make copies and retain one original.

CONTACTS

NPS District Supervisor

*Only contact NPS District Supervisor for significant trail obstructions (i.e. downed tree)

Name: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Report Volunteer Hours to FRIENDS Adopt-A-Trail Coordinator:

Staff@FriendsBRP.org

800.228.PARK(7275)

Please refer to US Forest Service Trail Construction and Maintenance Notebook for more details on trail maintenance.

“Live each day as you would climb a mountain. An occasional glance towards the summit puts the goal in mind. Many beautiful scenes can be observed from each new vantage point. Climb steadily, slowly, enjoy each passing moment; and the view from the summit will serve as a fitting climax to the journey.”

—Joe Porcino

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